United Nations system CEB/2006/1

Chief Executives Board for Coordination

14 June 2006

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First regular session of 2006
Madrid, 7 April 2006

Summary of conclusions

I. Introduction

1. The first regular session for 2006 of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), chaired by the Secretary-General, was held at the headquarters of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) in Madrid, on Friday, 7 April 2006. Following the conclusion of the session, a CEB retreat was held in the evening of 7 April and on Saturday 8 April in Segovia, Spain, where the executive heads held an interactive dialogue with two of the co-chairs and a number of members of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence.

2. The morning of 7 April was devoted to a private meeting of CEB. The executive heads were briefed and had an exchange of views on current developments, including those in relation to Iraq, the Middle East peace process, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and Iran (Islamic Republic of), as well as peacekeeping, humanitarian and food security challenges in Africa. The executive heads also reviewed economic developments, particularly in the area of trade and finance.

3. The present report covers the outcome of the first regular session of 2006 of CEB, which was held in the afternoon of 7 April.

4. The Board expressed its appreciation to Francesco Frangialli, Secretary-General of UNWTO, for the excellent arrangements that he and his colleagues had made for the CEB session. The Board also requested Mr. Frangialli to convey its sincere appreciation to the Spanish authorities.

5. The Board welcomed Kandeh Yumkella, Director-General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, who was attending a session of CEB for the first time.

Agenda

6. The Board adopted the following agenda for its first regular session:

1. Adoption of the agenda.

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2. Programme matters:

   (a) Follow-up to 2005 World Summit;

   (b) World Summit on the Information Society;

   (c) Other matters taken up by the High-Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP).

3. Gender mainstreaming and women, peace and security.

4. Management issues:

   (a) Issues addressed by the High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM):

      (i) Management reform: inter-agency collaboration on accountability and transparency;

      (ii) Accounting standards;

      (iii) Security and safety of staff;

      (iv) Other issues taken up by HLCM;

   (b) Dialogue with staff representatives.

5. Other matters: dates of the second regular session of 2006 of CEB and of its first regular session of 2007.

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II. Programme matters

7. The Secretary-General noted that the work of HLCP, as reflected in the Committee's report to the Board, was very relevant to the broader discussion that the Board would have at the retreat with members of the Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence. Referring to the HLCP/HLCM joint meeting held on 28 February in conjunction with their regular sessions, the Secretary-General expressed the hope that the two committees would continue to pursue their efforts to build synergies in their work, including through such joint meetings in the future. He asked the chairs of the two committees to make presentations on the outcome of the joint meeting discussions during the retreat.

A. Follow-up to the 2005 World Summit

8. The Secretary-General drew the attention of CEB members to the information contained in the annotated agenda on the developments that had taken place since the previous session of the Board. These included, inter alia, the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council; the ongoing discussions in the General Assembly on the follow-up to the provisions of the 2005 World Summit Outcome on development and the reform of the Economic and Social Council; the issuance of a report by the Secretary-General on United Nations management reform, entitled "Investing in the United Nations: for a stronger Organization worldwide" (A/60/692); and the setting up of the High-Level Panel on

United Nations System-wide Coherence. The Panel and its terms of reference had been the subject of two communications addressed by the Secretary-General to executive heads on 28 November 2005 and 16 February 2006. The Secretary-General noted that the dialogue between CEB and the Panel was of great importance and would continue at all levels, starting with the forthcoming retreat.

Briefing by the Chair of HLCP

9. The Chair of HLCP noted that the Committee had had an extensive and rich discussion on the follow-up to the 2005 World Summit. The Committee shared his view of the follow-up process under way as an historic opportunity to affect real change: that is, to shape the collective future of the system and its capacity to contribute to real progress for the global community. Discussions in the Committee, and at its joint meeting with HLCM, had approached system-wide reform in the development area as, first and foremost, a precious occasion to find ways for the system to leverage its full capacity towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals. Just a few years earlier, CEB members had speculated about the future of multilateralism, while expressing concern. Today, as a result of the Summit, there was evidence of strong, renewed support for the multilateral system, and the prospect of the most significant increase in official development assistance (ODA) that the international community had witnessed in decades. Along with this support, there were heightened expectations from the system and a strong drive for reform. Business as usual was not an option. It was critical that the system act as a full partner in this process of reform, to ensure that its collective strength would be fully tapped in meeting the challenges ahead.

10. He informed the Board that HLCP considered that the CEB report entitled, "One United Nations — catalyst for progress and change: how the Millennium Declaration is changing the way the United Nations system works", which had been transmitted to the Summit, and in particular its concluding chapter on the way forward, continued to provide a valid framework for the inter-agency action required to enhance the system's capacity to respond effectively to the outcome of the Summit. The Committee was of the view that such action should engage both the normative and operational dimensions of the system's work. In this regard, the Committee noted that the discussions in the lead-up to the establishment of the High-level Panel had tended to focus largely on operational dimensions. In expressing the hope that that focus would be broadened as the Panel began its work, the Committee recalled the emphasis that the outcome document had placed on three policy-related requirements that underpinned greater coherence: strengthening linkages between the normative and operational work of the system; better coordination of the representation of member States on the system's governing bodies; and ensuring that the main horizontal policy themes — sustainable development, human rights and gender — were taken into due account in decision-making.

11. The work of the United Nations system, particularly that of the conferences and summits, had a major impact in normative areas. The capacity of many organizations to operationalize these normative advances, however, had been hampered by zero nominal growth or even declines in resource flows. Bridging that gap should be a major objective of system-wide reform, and would require a renewed, focused effort on the part of the system to effectively pool its resources,

capacities and knowledge so as to maximize its contribution to advancing the overall development agenda.

12. Advances in this direction would require parallel progress in the coordination of the positions that countries took in the system's governing bodies. While this was largely a matter for member States, the secretariats of United Nations organizations could support such progress by establishing or reinforcing communities of practice across the system, and take measures to encourage and reward knowledge-sharing among colleagues across organizations. As an ex officio member of the Panel, he would seek to bring to bear the full complement of expertise available in the organizations of the system in an effort to capture the great potential for progress and change that the work of the Panel carried.

13. Turning to specific programme areas being dealt with by HLCP from the perspective of maximizing the system's response to the follow-up to the 2005 World Summit, he highlighted the Committee's work on gender mainstreaming (see para. 48 below), as well as on employment and migration — three areas which had been identified as major priorities in the Committee's work programme. In tandem with the forthcoming discussions on employment at the session of the Economic and Social Council in July 2006, and those on the High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development to be convened by the General Assembly in September, the Committee would be working to enhance horizontal cooperation in these two areas and would seek to develop specific proposals for possible action by CEB in support of the conclusions and recommendations that these intergovernmental events would reach. Advancing productive employment and fostering a coherent and effective response by the international community to the opportunities and challenges presented by international migration were both ends in themselves, and some of the key means by which horizontal policy objectives, such as sustainable development, human rights and gender mainstreaming, might be advanced. With regard to another aspect of the 2005 World Summit Outcome that required renewed attention by the system, namely, the Summit's recommendations on science and technology and the transfer of technology, the Committee was still exploring the most productive way of approaching them in its work programme and intended to revert to them at its next session.

14. Other issues that had been addressed by the Committee included the further elaboration of a core curriculum for the United Nations System Staff College, as part of the effort to give stronger roots to a common system-wide culture, and the system's preparedness in dealing with the threat of avian flu. The Committee was also endeavouring to monitor systematically the follow-up within the system to the conclusions and recommendations of CEB in various areas, ranging from curbing transnational organized crime to knowledge management.

Discussion

15. The Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) referred to an exchange of communications initiated by the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on the need, which he fully supported, to ensure that the system builds on existing strategies and efforts to meet the Millennium Development Goals and the goals agreed upon at conferences and summits, and avoids setting up parallel processes that would involve heavy transaction costs. He referred, in that context, to

the Millennium Project and the very positive contribution that it had made as an advisory and advocacy instrument in raising the profile of the Millennium Development Goals in the lead-up to the Summit. However, in the view of FAO, the work of the Millennium Project needed now to be fully integrated at the country level within the United Nations system's coordination mechanisms and programming and planning instruments. It would be detrimental to the effort to strengthen coordination at the country level and to harmonize effectively the system's follow-up actions in support of countries' own plans and priorities, if the Project were now to take on an operational role, on a distinct path away from the common modalities that were guiding the system's work at the country level.

16. In the same spirit, the Director-General of UNESCO had written to the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in October 2005, stressing the importance of collective and coordinated actions, particularly at the country level. He had underlined that the achievement of the "Education for All" (EFA) goals by 2015 was a key challenge at the country level and had invited the United Nations Development Group to develop a common framework of partnership and cooperation involving the organizations of the system, as well as all other stakeholders, pledging the full support of UNESCO as the lead agency in that process. The Director-General of UNESCO had, in this context, expressed concern over the joint UNDP/Millennium Project initiative, which was being launched without the full involvement of the concerned specialized agencies and which appeared to focus exclusively on the Millennium Development Goals rather than the broader range of agreed development goals which had received strong recognition in the 2005 World Summit Outcome.

17. The Administrator of UNDP pointed out that these issues were under active consideration by the United Nations Development Group. The Millennium Project had done much to place development high on the global agenda, and he was now trying to work, within the Group's structures and with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, to utilize and absorb into the work of the United Nations system the experience and skills that had been formed in the Project. In the outcome document, countries had made a commitment to develop, by the end of 2006, their own strategies, with a focus on the Millennium Development Goals and other agreed development goals. He concurred with the view that it would be counterproductive to ask countries to develop duplicative strategies. The Administrator of UNDP also underscored the importance of pursuing goals not included in the Millennium Development Goals but supported in the 2005 World Summit Outcome, such as productive employment. UNDP was now engaged in a stocktaking exercise of what existed at the country level, whether it be a poverty reduction strategy paper, a national development strategy or a national development plan. That information, which should be available in mid-2006, would help to identify gaps and consider how best to fill them. He invited all CEB members to work together with the resident coordinator system and the country team, under the overall coordinating role of the resident coordinator, in that effort. He was confident that further discussions, including those of the United Nations Development Group, would serve to clarify matters and allay the concerns expressed.

18. The Director-General of FAO stressed the importance, in monitoring and pursuing the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, of observing the prerogatives of the various specialized agencies in their respective areas of

competence and of focusing on the root causes that were impeding progress. In the case of the target of halving world hunger by 2015, set by the World Food Summit and reaffirmed by the Millennium Summit of the United Nations, the body responsible for monitoring progress was the FAO Committee on Food Security, which would undertake a 10-year review of the progress made in September 2006. The root causes of lack of progress in that area were well established, key among them being the fact that the share of agricultural ODA had declined in the past decade by over 50 per cent. New mechanisms to rediscover what was already known would not deliver progress. What would deliver progress was system-wi pport to the concerned agencies in generating the necessary political will, and concerted action at the country level in advancing country-owned plans and strategies.

19. The Secretary-General stressed the key role that individual agencies played in efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals in their respective areas. There was no intention to create parallel processes. The United Nations Development Group, as had been indicated by the Administrator of UNDP, should seek to maximize system-wide support for the action taken by the agencies and for country-led and country-owned policies and strategies.

20. Turning to the issue of employment, the Secretary-General recalled that the Director-General of the International Labour Organization (ILO) had been, for some time, flagging the linkages among employment, sustainable growth and poverty reduction. The Economic and Social Council would focus on those issues at its substantive session of 2006, and CEB should revert to them at its second regular session of 2006 in the light of the reflections of HLCP, following the Council's discussions.

21. The same considerations, the Secretary-General noted, applied to the issue of migration and development, the theme for the High-Level Dialogue of the General Assembly in September. At his request, the Geneva Migration Group had looked at inter-agency arrangements in that area and had recommended the establishment of a broader mechanism, to be known as the Global Migration Group. Participation in the Group would now include, in addition to the concerned Europe-based agencies, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, the World Bank, UNDP and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). That expanded Group was expected to contribute to the preparatory process for the High-Level Dialogue, and to the reflections of HLCP on the implications for the system as a whole of the outcome of the High-Level Dialogue, in preparation for the second regular session of 2006 of CEB.

22. The Director-General of ILO welcomed the HLCP initiative to try to operationalize those aspects of the outcome document that focused on employment and on migration and their linkages to development, and expressed strong support for the Committee's work in those areas. Across areas, a key advantage of the Committee was that it was the main institutional linkage between the United Nations and the sectoral agencies on the one hand, and the Bretton Woods institutions on the other. That linkage should be carefully nurtured.

23. On the issue of employment, the Director-General of ILO drew attention to the provisions of the 2005 World Summit Outcome that referred to full and productive employment as a key instrument for achieving poverty reduction goals. HLCP had requested ILO to consult with other organizations on how they viewed the issue of employment in the context of their own work, as well as on the idea of a mechanism

to guide the management of actions taken by the system in support of national efforts towards full and productive employment. As the Chair of HLCP had stressed, employment was both a goal in its own right and a means to achieve a host of other interrelated goals. As such, it could serve as an excellent example of horizontal cooperation within the system. ILO would follow up on the request of HLCP and would present options to CEB, through the Committee, on approaches to enhance the capacity of the system to deliver policy proposals that would help countries in the adoption of effective employment generation strategies.

24. The Under-Secretary-General for the Department of Economic and Social Affairs referred to ongoing efforts at the United Nations, at both the intergovernmental and Secretariat levels, to mainstream employment into the economic agenda. Preparatory events leading up to the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council were greatly benefiting from the support provided by ILO and were being viewed as a system-wide, fully participatory process.

25. On the issue of migration, the Director-General of ILO recalled that a main reason for the movement of people was to seek employment. People moved for that purpose within their own countries, within the south and from south to north. Without prejudice to the autonomous legal capacity of countries to regulate migration, there was a growing realization that common approaches that were not binding but that emerged as a result of collective reflection would be necessary to reap the full benefits of migration, in the interests of all. ILO had developed a rights-based, non-binding multilateral framework for labour migration, which was its main contribution to the High-Level Dialogue. HLCP had invited ILO, working with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, to collect pertinent information from throughout the system in order to obtain an overall view of migration-related programmes and policies. That information would be placed at the disposal of the Department in support of the High-Level Dialogue of the General Assembly in September, and subsequently HLCP and CEB. He requested all organizations to provide their input on the subject as quickly as possible.

26. In the ensuing discussion, the Executive-Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) stressed that any meaningful discussion of migration must take into account the spatial dimensions, namely migration and urbanization. As a development issue, migration was closely linked to the crisis of urbanization.

27. The Executive-Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), on behalf of the regional commissions, noted that migration was also closely linked to modernization and that the development models to be promoted by the system should take into account the need for a fair distribution of services, not only in the cities but also in the countryside. She added that ESCWA, together with ILO, was preparing a conference for the Middle East region, where migration was an increasingly important issue. In further work on migration, the system should be mindful of regional perspectives and regional specificities. The Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs recalled that all relevant agencies had been asked to provide input in the preparation of the Secretary-General's report for the High-Level Dialogue, which should seek to convey a comprehensive, system-wide perspective to the issues at hand.

28. Calling attention to other aspects of the follow-up to the World Summit, the Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization observed that the

United Nations system was now projecting a much better image in the area of disaster prevention. Speaking on behalf of the Management Board of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, he said that the organizations of the system were cooperating actively and constructively in developing prevention programmes. He expressed appreciation for the work done by UNESCO as a follow-up to the tsunami disaster. He thanked members of the Board for their positive response to his communications on the convening of the World Climate Conference.

29. **The Board called upon HLCP to continue to contribute actively to a coherent and effective follow-up to the 2005 World Summit, and to support CEB in providing further guidance in the system's response to the challenges posed by the Summit.**

B. World Summit on the Information Society

30. The attention of the Board was drawn to the progress made within the system in the follow-up to the outcome of the Geneva and Tunis phases of the World Summit on the Information Society. The Secretary-General had conveyed to the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) strong appreciation for his leadership in steering the Summit towards a very positive outcome. In respect of the recommendations addressed to him by the Summit, the Secretary-General of the United Nations had taken a number of specific actions. These included (a) the convening of the internet governance forum, which was expected to hold its first meeting in Greece in the near future and which was being supported by a secretariat, established in Geneva, that was leading the consultative process in this regard; and (b) the setting up of a global alliance for information and communication technology and development, which was intended to promote multi-stockholder dialogue, including that in support of intergovernmental policy debates to further the follow-up to the Summit in meetings of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development and the Economic and Social Council.

31. A note before the Board on a framework for United Nations system follow-up to and implementation of the outcome of the Summit provided an overview of the arrangements that were being set in motion to promote the necessary mobilization of efforts to implement the outcome at the intergovernmental and inter-agency levels, and at the country and headquarters levels. In relation to the latter, the note contained the proposed terms of reference for a United Nations group on the information society, which the Summit had asked the Secretary-General to establish in his capacity as Chair of CEB.

32. The Chairman of HLCP commended the group's terms of reference for CEB approval. He added that, in reviewing the system's response to the Summit, the Committee was duly conscious of the complexity of the problematique of the information society, which cut across many of the programme and policy issues before the system. A great deal of emphasis had been placed in the HLCP discussion on the need to integrate fully the follow-up and implementation processes into the actions under way to advance the overall development agenda.

33. The Secretary-General of ITU noted that, for the first time, through the Summit's processes, world leaders had addressed in a comprehensive way the profound implications of the communications revolution for the future of society,

recognizing in particular the vital importance of information and communication technology to economic and social development in the twenty-first century. At the first phase in Geneva in 2003, the Summit had set forth the key principles and issues of the information society and reiterated the importance of information and communication technology as a critical enabler of national development. The Geneva Plan of Action adopted by the Summit established critical targets for global connectivity by 2015 and 11 key action lines. In Tunis, the world leaders agreed on the Tunis Commitment and the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, which set out specific and concrete measures to turn principles into action and established a process for implementation and follow-up to the World Summit on the Information Society.

34. He expressed his deepest appreciation for the support of the Secretary-General of the United Nations in both phases of the Summit and for the active participation of the United Nations system in Tunis. He invited all agencies to participate in the series of events planned in Geneva during the week of 17 May, which included the commemoration of World Information Society Day. He noted that the goal of bridging the digital divide was not beyond reach. ITU estimated that every village in the world could be connected with an investment of about $1 billion.

35. The Secretary-General of ITU drew attention to the modalities being established at the system-wide level for the implementation of the 11 action lines identified by the Summit, and expressed support for the terms of reference and working modalities for the United Nations group on the information society, as proposed by HLCP. A number of executive heads provided details of their organizations' extensive involvement in the Summit process and expressed their commitment to remain fully involved in the implementation and follow-up of the Summit's outcome. The Director-General of the Universal Postal Union emphasized the importance of the postal sector in the information society.

36. In the ensuing discussion, clarifications were sought about the relationship between the different arrangements for follow-up and implementation set out in the note, including the global alliance, and the Summit's outcome and the relationships among the arrangements themselves. It was noted that the only element in the note that called for specific endorsement by CEB was the proposed establishment of a United Nations group on the information society. The note explained that the purpose of the group would be to act for multiple stakeholders as an information and coordination nexus for the inter-agency activities associated with both the implementation of the action lines and the follow-up processes in the Economic and Social Council and other bodies. With regard to operating modalities, the group would function similarly to other inter-agency networks, that is, without mandated reporting to HLCP but consulting with it, as necessary, to resolve specific, cross-cutting policy issues. A note of caution was expressed as far as avoiding multiplication of inter-agency arrangements in this area, and in the related area of knowledge management. It would be desirable at an appropriate stage to carry out a review of those arrangements with a view to streamlining them.

37. **With these understandings, the Board approved the establishment of the United Nations Group on Information Society, with the terms of reference and modalities outlined in the paper submitted by HLCP.**

C. Other matters taken up by HLCP

38. The attention of the Board was drawn to other initiatives taken by the Committee at its previous session. Among them were: (a) a review of the work of the Oceans and Coastal Areas Network (UN-Oceans), including the web-based United Nations Atlas of the Oceans, in relation to which the HLCP report had appealed to the organizations most directly concerned to continue financial support for the extension of the project; (b) a review of the activities of the United Nations Geographic Information Working Group; (c) a briefing on a new study being launched by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on violence against children; and (d) the establishment of an inter-agency United Nations tourism exchange network, to be steered by UNWTO, the aim of which was to facilitate information-sharing and promote inter-agency collaboration in that area.

39. In his introductory comments, the Chair of HLCP had noted that the Committee, in addition to addressing the substantive areas that it had identified as priorities in its work programme, was endeavouring to become apprised of some less known yet dynamic instances of horizontal cooperation taking place among experts in the system. Those included the work of the United Nations Geographic Information Working Group, which involved a number of core agencies but had raised in HLCP the interest of a number of other organizations in participating in its work; and the work of UN-Oceans, one of the new inter-agency networks established, along with UN-Water and UN-Energy, in the aftermath of the Johannesburg Summit. As part of the briefing on UN-Oceans, the Committee had heard a presentation on the United Nations Atlas of the Oceans project.

40. The Committee had noted that inter-agency collaboration in technical areas, such as those referred to above, made a distinct contribution to enhancing the collective delivery of the system but was often not adequately acknowledged and backed up with the necessary resources. With regard in particular to UN-Oceans and the United Nations Atlas of the Oceans project, the Committee had assessed very positively the work under way. FAO was congratulated for its leadership of the Atlas project and all concerned agencies were invited to support the project financially.

41. The Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) stated that the Atlas project was an extremely useful initiative and joined HLCP in congratulating FAO for shepherding it. He said that his organization would support it financially and he urged other organizations also to do so to ensure the project's financial sustainability.

42. Turning to the proposed United Nations tourism exchange network, the Secretary-General of UNWTO recalled that tourism was an increasingly important economic activity with major social, cultural and environmental implications, in which a growing number of United Nations organizations were becoming involved. While UNWTO had been given a central role in steering the network, he expressed the hope that its work would be approached as an inclusive and fully participatory endeavour. His agency would welcome initiatives from any organization interested in contributing to sustainable tourism. His main concern was that there should be no duplication of effort and that the network should be able to build synergies among different actions and actors. The network would be a flexible mechanism designed to promote inter-agency cooperation, mainly through a dedicated website where information concerning activities and programmes on tourism could be posted

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online by the focal points designated by the concerned organizations. He was confident that the network would contribute to furthering coherence in the system and would help in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

43. **The Board took note of the developments in the above-mentioned areas and decided to launch formally the United Nations Tourism Exchange Network (UNTEN).**

44. **Members of the Board expressed their thanks to the Chair and Vice-Chair of HLCP for their invaluable contribution in guiding the work of the Committee.**

45. It was recalled that, at the second regular session of 2005 of CEB, the Secretary-General had raised the issue of the mid-term comprehensive global review of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 by the General Assembly in September 2006. In that context, the Secretary-General wished to express his thanks to all organizations for their contribution to ensuring coordinated input for the review. Equally important were the sectoral appraisals by relevant United Nations entities in their respective fields of competence. **The Board noted that the High Representative would report on the outcome of the global review of the Brussels Programme of Action at the Board's second regular session of 2006.**

III. Gender mainstreaming and women, peace and security

46. Attention was drawn to the Secretary-General's letter dated 16 January 2006, in which he had asked both high-level committees to develop, in cooperation with his Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, a system-wide gender mainstreaming policy and strategy. In the same letter, the Secretary-General had sought an active engagement by the system in the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), on women, peace and security.

47. The Chair of HLCP recalled that the Committee had reviewed the progress made in relation to the issues raised in the Secretary-General's letter on the basis of a paper prepared by the Special Adviser. The Committee had shared the view expressed in the paper that it was not possible to expect adequate progress in achieving the internationally agreed development goals and the Millennium Development Goals while the potential of one half of the world's population was not being fully realized. It had also shared the conclusion reached in the paper that there was a need for stronger accountability within the organizations of the system and for stronger action in terms of supporting training and capacity-building. Gender mainstreaming should not only feature among the priority programmes of each organization, but should be effectively integrated in the organizations' overall strategies and fully reflected in their budgetary decisions. Strengthening the system's capacity and effectiveness in relation to gender mainstreaming should be among the key issues to be given priority attention in the effort to enhance system-wide coherence.

48. The Chair of HLCM also briefed the Board on the outcome of the Committee's discussion on gender mainstreaming. HLCM had recognized that, while some progress had been made, the system's real achievements in ensuring gender mainstreaming had, so far, been very meagre. From a management perspective, this

was, first and foremost, an issue of accountability. The Committee agreed that senior managers should be held accountable through monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, including performance appraisals, and that achieving gender balance in the secretariats of organizations as well as in inter-agency and intergovernmental bodies, in accordance with the commitments made, should become a major focus of system-wide collaboration. The Chair added that the Inter-agency Network on Women and Gender Equality did not have the resources or the authority to make the contribution expected of it.

49. The Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women expressed satisfaction that HLCM and HLCP had both agreed on the need for a system-wide policy and strategy for gender equality. The two committees had reviewed the Security Council's findings on the action plan for the implementation of Council resolution 1325 (2000), and had agreed on the need for the system to establish stronger accountability mechanisms in that area as well.

50. She added that the system's statistics showed that everything that was negative had a woman's face: poverty, illiteracy, HIV/AIDS. Action needed to be taken urgently to translate commitment into real progress on the ground. In that context, she invited CEB to consider:

(a) Why the United Nations system had fallen so short of its commitments to gender equality and empowerment of women;

(b) What additional and concrete actions with timelines and benchmarks needed to be taken now and in the future;

(c) What instructions were required to strengthen accountability, joint efforts and linking of the normative and the operational work of the United Nations system.

51. Following up on the high-level committees' discussions, her office would start work, in consultation with all of the organizations of the system, on a system-wide policy and strategy and would report on the progress made to the Economic and Social Council in July. Prior to the session of the Council, the upcoming World Urban Forum, to be held in Vancouver in June, would provide an opportunity to highlight the plight of urban women slum dwellers. Interested United Nations organizations were invited to join in the side events on that theme, which the Office of the Special Adviser would co-sponsor together with UN-Habitat.

52. On behalf of CEB, appreciation was expressed for the work of the two committees as well as for the presentation made by the Special Adviser, which had helped to place so squarely before the executive heads the issues involved.

53. **The Board endorsed the conclusions presented to it, on the basis of the discussions of the high-level committees: (a) it expressed serious concern over the lack of sufficient progress in achieving gender equality and empowerment of women and in the elaboration and implementation of a gender mainstreaming policy and strategy; (b) it called on the system to strengthen ongoing initiatives in this area and to take additional and concrete actions with timelines and benchmarks, building on the recommendations of HLCM, as set forth in its report; and (c) it committed itself to addressing ways of ensuring that adequate resources, both financial and human, were deployed by the organizations of the system, so that progress in both gender mainstreaming and**

the implementation of the system-wide plan of action might be effectively advanced.

54. It was observed that gender mainstreaming presented a very complex challenge for the system. It was, however, a challenge that the system could meet, if it would muster the necessary commitment. **CEB decided to revert to the issue at its second regular session of 2006, when it would consider further concrete actions to be taken by the executive heads on the basis of proposals to be submitted by the Special Adviser and the recommendations of the two high-level committees.**

IV. Management issues

55. Attention was drawn to the positive outcome of the discussions in HLCM on the external evaluation of oversight mechanisms and governance arrangements, which the 2005 World Summit had asked the Secretary-General to initiate. The Secretary-General had established a steering committee to oversee that work and expressed the hope that that process would enjoy the active support of all organizations concerned. Concrete progress had also been made in HLCM in moving towards new, common accounting standards. With the support and cooperation of all organizations of the system, good progress was also being made in regard to instituting a security management system equal to the magnitude of the threats and challenges faced by the system. In that regard, the HLCM in its report had warned against any slowing down in the effort to establish a truly unified security system, and stressed that meeting the attached financial commitments was crucial to maintaining its operational effectiveness.

A. Issues addressed by the Management Committee

(a) Management reform: inter-agency collaboration on accountability and transparency

(b) Accounting standards

(c) Security and safety of staff

(d) Other matters

Briefing by the Chair of HLCM

56. In introducing the report of the Committee, the Chair of HLCM expressed her thanks to the Vice-Chair, Dennis Aitken of the World Health Organization (WHO), and all members of the Committee for the strong support that had been extended to her in assuming the leadership of the Committee, and for the collegial atmosphere that had prevailed throughout the Committee's session.

57. She began by noting that holding the meetings of HLCP and HLCM concurrently at the same location had proved very productive. At a time when reform was high on the system's agenda, it was important that both programming and management should come together in driving the process. She expressed the hope that the experiment would be repeated.

58. She noted that, given the sense of urgency and common commitment to results-based management that visibly drove the Committee's work, it should be possible to make concrete progress in relation to the whole range of issues that made up the Committee's work programme. Across those issues, achieving progress in regard to reform should not be perceived as an additional burden or a separate concern but as a necessary, integral element of the work, of the progress, to be accomplished. A specific issue that had emerged from the discussions was the need to avoid duplication in the activities of the various working groups convened under the auspices of HLCM, HLCP and the United Nations Development Group. A review had thus been initiated to see where they overlapped and to consider how best to streamline arrangements so as to optimize results.

59. On the question of accountability and transparency, the Committee had agreed that inputs to the external study to be conducted by the Secretary-General's steering committee would distinguish between issues of governance, which would cover only the United Nations and its funds and programmes, and auditing, investigative and related oversight functions which would cover the United Nations, its funds and programmes and the specialized agencies. The Committee had set up an ad hoc group to interact with the steering committee. Their first meeting had been held on 16 March 2006. It was expected that the Secretary-General would share his report on governance with the executive heads at CEB meetings.

60. On accounting standards, the Chair recalled that HLCM had reached agreement in December 2005 on the adoption throughout the system of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS), with a target date of 2010 for all organizations to move to the new standards. The Committee had now agreed on the terms of reference of a working group to oversee the implementation of that decision and to assist organizations in the process of adapting to the new standards. The Committee had also approved a budget for a continuing inter-agency project in this area.

61. With regard to the issue of security and safety of staff, the Committee had been briefed on the security situation and new security management system by the Under-Secretary-General of the Department of Safety and Security of the United Nations Secretariat. According to him, United Nations staff were more vulnerable than ever before to security threats and great vigilance was therefore required. Meanwhile, the operational security chain was being strengthened by making more direct use of designated officials. There remained, at the same time, some thorny issues relating to the sharing of field-related security costs, on which the Committee had not yet been able to reach full agreement.

62. The Committee had also been briefed by David Nabarro during a videoconference on 10 March on arrangements for contingency planning relating to the avian flu. The Secretary-General had requested organizations to designate focal points at duty stations, including headquarters, and to identify resources to ensure that plans could be implemented, if required, with all due urgency. The Chair of HLCM took the opportunity to remind executive heads to identify such focal points as quickly as possible and to transmit the requested information to Mr. Nabarro (at Nabila.Alibbai@undp.org).

63. On the core curriculum for the United Nations System Staff College, the Committee had requested that a business plan with costing be presented to it at its

next session, so that the matter could be comprehensively addressed by the Board in the third quarter of 2006.

64. **The Board expressed its appreciation for the progress being made by HLCM in its work in the above-mentioned areas and, in particular, for the focused attention it was giving to management reforms and the security and safety of staff.**

65. **The Board expressed its thanks to the Chair and the Vice-Chair of HLCM for their effective leadership of the Committee.**

B. Dialogue with staff representatives

66. The Board met with Robert Weisell of the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations and Oleg Kiiamov, President of the Coordinating Committee for International Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System. The main issues raised by the staff representatives were the importance of timely and systematic consultations on all subjects having a direct effect on the conditions of service of the international civil servants and the security and safety of staff. Stressing the need for enhancing the dialogue between staff and management, staff representatives called for the development of training programmes in labour relations for both managers and staff. Staff representatives expressed appreciation for the new measures taken to strengthen the security management system and reiterated their long-standing position concerning the protection of local United Nations staff, including their evacuation along with international staff, noting that local staff were often subject to imprisonment and attacks solely because of their links with the United Nations.

67. The Board expressed its thanks to the staff representatives for sharing their views and concerns, of which good note had been taken by the executive heads.

V. Other matters

A. Dates of the second regular session of 2006 and the first regular session of 2007

68. The Board confirmed Friday, 27 October and Saturday, 28 October as the dates for its second regular session of 2006, to be held at United Nations Headquarters. CEB also confirmed that its first regular session of 2007 would be held at ILO headquarters in Geneva, at the invitation of the Director-General of ILO. Dates for the first regular session of 2007 will be set upon further consultations.

B. Tribute to Klaus Töpfer

69. The Board paid tribute to Klaus Töpfer, who had led the United Nations Environment Programme for the past eight years with great distinction and had made a major contribution to raising the profile of environmental issues on the global agenda.